

State of Alaska

# Department of Health & Social Services

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**NEWS RELEASE**



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## **Denali Commission awards \$6.85 million to 19 communities for health & social services projects**

*H&SS recommended, will administer \$3.65 million of the projects in 13 communities*

The Denali Commission awarded \$6.85 million to a variety of necessary health and social services projects in 19 Alaskan communities, based on recommendations from the Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS).

"The Alaska Department of Health & Social Services has some great partners in the provider community, strong relationships with the people we serve, and we all benefit from the Alaska Congressional Delegation and the Denali Commission's focus on providing resources to address critical needs in our state," DHSS Commissioner Joel Gilbertson said.

To date, Gilbertson said the Denali Commission has focused its funding on primary health care facilities. "We helped them prioritize a portion of their current fiscal year appropriation to fund 'other than primary care' health facilities. We share the goal of assisting all rural Alaskan communities achieve sustainable and appropriate health care, and I think these new projects will be a tremendous benefit to Alaskans," he said.

At the request of the Denali Commission, DHSS assembled a special ad hoc health care committee to help allocate funds to a mix of projects that are qualified and ready, including rural hospitals, clinics, long-term care, and social service facilities. "I want to express my thanks to our partners who helped us respond quickly, including Lorraine Derr, Executive Director of the Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association, who helped us compile a list of projects from hospitals."

DH&SS will administer the Denali Commission funds for \$3.65 million of these projects.

### **Project Descriptions:**

#### **Kenai/Soldotna:**

Central Peninsula General Hospital (CPGH) in Soldotna was awarded \$300,000 to help purchase upgraded MRI equipment that has a wider and shorter bore, allowing for a shorter scan time. "Patients who cannot tolerate the present MRI will no longer have to travel to get this service,"

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Susan Caswell, CPGH Grants Coordinator said. "We are pleased to be offering continuing improvements in non-invasive diagnostic imaging services right here, for the Central Kenai Peninsula."

Heritage Place Nursing Facility (HPNF) in Soldotna was awarded a total of \$290,000 for roof repairs, a medication management system, and other general repairs and upgrades. "These projects will enhance the safety and well-being for the residents at Heritage Place, and help us manage our facility more efficiently and effectively," Dennis Murray, HPNF Administrator said. "I applaud the leadership of both the Denali Commission and the Alaska Dept. of Health & Social Services for this thoughtful assistance."

#### **Palmer:**

Valley Hospital in Palmer was awarded \$299,500 to replace radiography and fluoroscopy equipment and upgrade their Imaging Department to a fully digital system. "This replaces equipment that was a decade old," George Larson, Valley Hospital CEO said. "With this upgrade of modern and dependable equipment, we can offer our patients better care."

#### **Cordova:**

Cordova Community Medical Center (CCMC) was awarded a total of \$264,400 to replace sterilization, EKG, X-ray processing, and ultrasound equipment, to purchase and install bone densitometry equipment, and for equipment for safely disposing of hospital biohazard waste. "For the first time we will be able to offer bone density evaluations in Cordova, so patients do not have to travel out of town," Bill McKinnon, CCMC Administrator said. "These projects all help us to give our patients better service".

#### **Fairbanks:**

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH) was awarded \$116,000 for startup costs to help develop the Fairbanks Community Diabetes Outpatient Self-Management Education Center. "We believe a diabetes self management program can significantly impact the health of the community of Fairbanks and there is a great interest on the part of providers, consumers and the hospital to develop and maintain a quality diabetes education program," Mike Powers, FMH CEO said.

#### **Juneau & Skagway:**

Bartlett Regional Hospital (BRH) was awarded \$7,500 for purchase and installation of a DEA-approved pharmacy safe. "This will help us purchase approved pharmacy storage equipment to start a methadone detoxification program for opiate addiction," Stephen Sundby, PhD, Juneau Recovery Hospital Administrator said.

Bartlett Regional Hospital was also awarded \$120,000 to replace obsolete radiology equipment at the Dahl Memorial Clinic in Skagway. "BRH recently signed a contract to manage Dahl Memorial Clinic," Leslie Dodd, Clinic Board Chair said. "Skagway has a year round population of about 800, but serves a significant population of summer tourists and summer workers. These funds could not have come at a better time. Our old equipment is in need of repairs, and these funds will allow us to replace equipment that we may not have been able to afford."

#### **Ketchikan:**

Ketchikan General Hospital (KGH) was awarded \$262,800 to purchase and install a new digital radiology and fluoroscopy system, replacing obsolete equipment. "Due to geographic location, Ketchikan residents and tourists rely solely on Ketchikan General Hospital to meet their medical needs," Patrick Branco, KGH Administrator said. "The new digital radiology and fluoroscopy system will enable us to give our patients more precise diagnoses and better care."

#### **Kodiak:**

Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center (PKIMC) was awarded \$191,000 to replace x-ray equipment and upgrade other radiological equipment. "Replacing the x-ray equipment is critical for patient care. It will further our ability to provide Kodiak citizens with quality medical services on island," Kelley Mette, PKIMC Radiology Department Manager said. "These equipment improvements and upgrades translate directly into better care for our patients."

#### **Sitka:**

Sitka Community Hospital (SCH) was awarded \$200,000 to purchase a new ultrasound machine and replace 9-year old equipment. "This award answers our most urgent need for capital improvement in our Imaging Services Department – the need to replace ultrasound equipment with new technology that can do so much more," Bill Patten, SCH CEO said. "We will be able to get results of procedures to our patients more quickly, and avoid costly and inconvenient patient travel to out-of-state hospitals."

#### **Seward:**

Providence Seward Medical and Care Center (PSM&CC) was awarded \$288,000 to purchase equipment and enable them to offer CT scan services. The City of Seward owns the facility and is financially responsible for the hospital, and received the grant on behalf of Providence Seward Medical and Care Center.

"CT Services are not offered here now, and the closest facility is in Anchorage, a 2-1/2 hour drive or 45 minute flight away, weather permitting," Sandy Reese, PSM&CC Administrator said. "The medical staff is unanimously behind acquiring CT capability. Being a Critical Access Hospital in a geographically and seasonally inaccessible area, this diagnostic tool is an invaluable asset and a gift to the community. We are so pleased the Dept. of Health & Social Services and the Denali Commission made the purchase of this important piece of equipment possible."

#### **Valdez:**

Valdez Regional Health Authority (VRHA) was awarded \$300,000 to purchase equipment and enable them to offer CT scan services. "CT services are not offered here now, and the closest facility is in Anchorage, a six-hour drive or 45-minute flight away, weather permitting," Jim Culley, VRHA CEO said. "Last year we sent out 35 emergency patients for CT scans, and 20 would not have had to travel if we offered this service. Lives will be saved."

#### **Homer:**

South Peninsula Hospital (SPH) was awarded \$250,000 for a bulk oxygen system to replace the bank of oxygen cylinders that require a high level of daily maintenance. "This is a great opportunity for a long needed update to our medical oxygen supply system," Charlie Button,

SPH Chief Financial Officer said. "This system is capable of meeting all of the hospital's oxygen needs at a tremendous cost savings. This grant comes at an advantageous time for us. We are currently making plans to begin our hospital expansion project. We will be able to install this system during the renovation process, at a considerable cost savings and without any extra inconvenience to our patients and staff. Having a safe, reliable, cost-effective system in place will help us to continue providing quality health care for the South Peninsula Service Area."

**Petersburg:**

The City of Petersburg was awarded \$78,000 for finishing the residential kitchen facilities at Mountain View Manor. In an expansion project that totals \$3.3 million, Mountain View Manor is adding 20 apartments so they can offer assisted living spaces to seniors. "The ability to offer our seniors assisted living is very important because it promotes the resident's participation in the community, and offers them the opportunity for increased independence through training and support," Bruce Jones, Petersburg City Manager said.

Petersburg Medical Center (PMC) was awarded \$300,000 to purchase equipment and enable them to offer CT scan services. "We estimate that having CT services available in Petersburg would save the community over a quarter of a million dollars a year from unnecessary medevacs and from people leaving the community to have the procedure done elsewhere," John Bringham, PMC CEO said. "Computerized tomography (CT) has become an essential basic diagnostic device especially for emergency care, and this will help save lives in our community."

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